A Developmental Services Bulletin from the Ministry of Community and Social Services

BUDGET 2007 AND DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES

MPP Laurel Broten and
Minister Meilleur at Community Living
Toronto on March 27

On Thursday March 22, the Ontario government announced more than $200 million in additional operating funding over four years to support agencies that provide services for vulnerable adults. The increases in 2007-08 will grow in each of the three subsequent years. Details on this funding will be described in a future bulletin.

The budget also detailed a further investment of $7 million in new capital funding for developmental services community agencies, in addition to the $29 million dollars in capital funding announced in recent months. These investments are a key component of the government's plan to foster a stronger workforce while improving developmental services agencies.

With this new funding injection, the government will have invested more than $500 million in developmental services since 2003. This will strengthen capacity in the developmental services sector and will help agencies improve and sustain

residential and community services, and increase supports to families caring for family members with a developmental disability at home.

Minister of Community and Social Services Madeleine Meilleur visited Community Living Toronto on March 27, where the news of the funding was applauded.

"Our 2007 budget demonstrates our government's ongoing commitment to supporting and strengthening developmental services and to building more inclusive communities," said Meilleur. "Change takes time, and I truly appreciate all of your participation and support as we build a new system that is fair and easier to access."

For more information on the 2007 Budget, please visit the Ministry of Finance website at http://ontariobudget.ca/english/chpt1a.html#8d.

The Six Principles of Transformation:

1. **Citizenship** – supports for people who have a developmental disability promote self-determination and participation in all aspects of community life.
2. **Fairness and equity** – supports are equitable and people with similar situations receive similar supports across the province.
3. **Accessibility and portability** –funding and supports are flexible and go with the person if he/she moves to another community.
4. **Safety and security** – supports are designed to balance appropriate supervision, especially for those who are most at risk, with the right to self-determination, privacy and confidentiality.
5. **Accountability** – service delivery will include mechanisms to hold service providers accountable to the people using their services and the ministry for the quality and outcome of the supports they offer.
6. **Sustainability** – funding and supports are based on assessed needs and available resources in the context of a long-range plan for the developmental services system.

For over a century, the province of Ontario has provided services and supports to people with a developmental disability.

In 1987, the Ontario government committed to evolving from an institution-based to a community-based developmental services (DS) system that promotes greater inclusion, independence and choice. Over the past 30 years, Ontario has closed 13 of its provincially-operated institutions for adults with a developmental disability, and has helped more than 6,000 people successfully make the transition to community life.

In 2004, the government announced that the last three government-operated facilities for adults with a developmental disability would close. We are on target to complete those closures by March 31, 2009.

While we are completing the final stage of the transition to full community inclusion, we have been building new community homes, repairing and renovating existing ones, strengthening the system of community supports and introducing new initiatives to build a fair, accessible and sustainable DS system.

As part of its commitment to build a more inclusive province, the government is working with individuals with a developmental disability, families, and community organizations to build the foundation for the next generation of services for people with a developmental disability. Various initiatives have been implemented by the government since 2004, when the intention to transform the DS system was announced. These include:

- Important policy changes made to the *Special Services at Home* (SSAH) program in 2005 to expand eligibility for SSAH and to create a more flexible program that gives people more choice in how services are delivered.
- The launch of the *Ontario Developmental Services Career Connections Grant* in 2005 to enhance opportunities for students to develop the clinical and research skills they need to be professionals in the field of DS in Ontario.
- The launch of the *Passport Mentoring Initiative* in March 2006, which has sparked overwhelming interest. This initiative exposes secondary students to post-school experiences and helps them explore their community so they can make informed decisions about what they might like to do when they leave school.

- The establishment of four regional *Community Networks of Specialized Care* in March 2006 across Ontario. These networks connect the specialized services system, thereby better coordinating resources, increasing the range and availability of specialized supports and building expertise and community capacity through joint research, training and education initiatives.
- *Opportunities and Action*, a consultation paper that outlined a new vision for supports for people with a developmental disability and invited input from individuals, families and organizations was released in May 2006.
- An *Expert Panel on Eligibility for Developmental Services* convened and met over the summer and fall of 2006 to advise on the eligibility criteria that would define more clearly who has a developmental disability and is eligible to apply for ministry-funded supports and services.
- Since *Opportunities and Action* was released, amongst other projects, the ministry has been working with self-advocates, families, community agencies and associations to design a consistent and streamlined process to apply for DS and supports. A *new application package* has now been tested.

We look forward to sharing the Ontario budget details for DS with you in future bulletins.

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